

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT,CE
SUBJECT: ANURA BANDARANAIKE INTERVIEW

1. PRIME MINISTER BANDARANAIKE'S 28-YEAR OLD SON ANURA, INTERVIEWED IN THE JANUARY 28 ISSUE OF ASIAWEEK, TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT HIS PERSONAL PLANS AS WELL AS THE POLITICAL ROLE OF YOUTH IN SRI LANKA. SAYING THAT HE WILL DEFINITELY CONTEST A SEAT AT THE NEXT ELECTIONS, (PREFERABLY IN A RURAL RATHER THAN AN URBAN AREA) HE NEVERTHELESS REFUSED TO DECLARED HIMSELF "POSITIVE" THAT ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD. "THE FINAL DECISION LIES IN THE HANDS OF THE PRIME MINISTER", HE ADDED. HE DID SAY THAT "THERE IS NO QUESTION OF STAYING ON IN POWER INDEFINITELY. WE BELIEVE IN DEMOCRACY."

2. WHILE CITING THE "TREMENDOUS FAILINGS" OF DEMOCRACY, HE SAID THAT "WE ADHOR" THE ONLY TWO ALTERNATIVES--A RIGHT-WING DICTATORSHIP OR A COMMUNIST REGIME. HE URGED MORE REPRESENTATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM FOR YOUTH AS WELL AS FOR TRADE UNIONS, TEACHERS, WORKERS AND PEASANTS. DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITY OF A YOUTH PARLIAMENT, HE OPINED THAT SUCH A BODY "SHOULD BE A SUPPLEMENTARY CHAMBER OF THE NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY," BUT ADMITTED THAT SUCH
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AN IDEA WAS UNORTHODOX.

3. ANURA'S STRONGEST WORDS WERE RESERVED FOR THE TROTSKYITE LANKA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY (LSSP), THROWN OUT OF THE RULING COALITION IN SEPTEMBER 1975. CALLING HIMSELF A "PRAGMATIC LEFTIST", HE REFERRED TO THE LSSP AS THE "MOST HYPOCRITICAL POLITICAL PARTY IN THE

COUNTRY," WHOSE LEADERSHIP "DOES NOT MEAN A THING THEY SAY." HE PREDICTED THE THE LSSP WOULD BE WIPE OUT AS A POLITICAL PARTY AT THE NEXT ELECTION.

4. ON THE SENSITIVE SUBJECT OF TAMIL-SINHALESE RELATIONS, HE SAID THAT HE HAD SUCCEEDED TO SOME EXTENT IN ESTABLISHING A DIALOGUE WITH TAMIL YOUTH. HOWEVER, HE ADDED "THEY HAVE THE COMMUNAL ISSUE SO MUCH AT HEART, AND IT CAN BE WHIPPED UP AT ANY TIME." POINGINT OUT THAT NEITHER HIS MOTHER'S SRI LANKA FREEDOM PARTY NOR THE OPPOSITION UNITED NATIONAL PARTY (UNP) WOULD BE WILLING TO GRANT THE TAMILS A SEPARATE STATE, HE SAID THAT THE TAMIL UNITED LIBERATION FRONT'S INSISTENCE ON SEPARATION HAS MOVED THAT PARTY TO AN EXTREME POSITION,BASED ON COMMUNALISM.

4. ANURAL MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE IS DEVOTING HIMSELF COMPLETELY TO POLITICS. HE FEELS THAT HE HAS BEEN THE TARGET OF OPPOSITION ATTACKS BECAUSE HE IS A "FORMIDABLE FOE." WHEREAS BEFORE THE UNP ATTACKED FINANCE MINISTER FELIX DIAS BANDARANAIKE, THE OPPOSITION HAS NOW DIVERTED ITS ABUSE TO HIM. IT FLATTERS HIM TO BE CONSIDERED THE UNP'S CHEIF FOE.

6. ON THE VALUE OF THE BANDARANAIKE NAME, HE ADMITTED THAT IT IS A POLITICAL ASSET. NEVERTHELESS, "PEOPLE ARE NOT JUST GOING TO VOTE FOR NAMES." "WHATEVER I HAVE ACHIEVED HAS BEEN ON MY ONW." REED UNCLASSIFIED

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